UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/50/496
3 October 1995

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Fiftieth session
Agenda item 31

COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. In its resolution 49/14 of 15 November 1994, on cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States, the General Assembly took note with satisfaction of the report of the Secretary-General (A/49/519), and requested the Secretariat of the United Nations and the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States, within their respective fields of competence, to intensify further their cooperation towards the realization of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the strengthening of international peace and security, economic development, disarmament, decolonization, self-determination and the eradication of all forms of racism and racial discrimination.

2. By the same resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to strengthen cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and other organizations and agencies of the United Nations system and the League of Arab States and its specialized organizations, in order to enhance their capacity to serve the mutual interests of the two organizations in the political, economic, social, humanitarian, cultural and administrative fields. The Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to coordinate follow-up action to facilitate the implementation of the proposals of a multilateral nature adopted at the Tunis meeting in 1983 and to take appropriate action regarding the proposals adopted at previous meetings.

3. The General Assembly decided that, in order to intensify cooperation and for the purpose of review and appraisal of progress, as well as to prepare comprehensive periodic reports, a general meeting between the United Nations system and the League of Arab States should take place once every two years, and inter-agency sectoral meetings should be organized annually on areas of priority and wide importance in the development of the Arab States.

4. The General Assembly recommended that, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations and the League of Arab States, the next general meeting on cooperation between the representatives of the secretariats of the United Nations system and the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States and its specialized organizations should be held during 1995. It further requested the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in cooperation with the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, to encourage periodic consultation between representatives of the Secretariat of the United Nations and the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States to review and strengthen coordination mechanisms with a view to accelerating implementation and follow-up action of multilateral projects proposals and recommendations adopted by the meetings between the two organizations.

5. The General Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its fiftieth session a progress report on the implementation of resolution 49/14.

II. CONSULTATIONS AND EXCHANGES OF INFORMATION

6. On 1 October 1994, the Secretary-General of the United Nations met with the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States at United Nations Headquarters. They discussed matters related to the cooperation between the two organizations and exchanged views on questions of interest to both, concerning Iraq, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, and the situation in Somalia.

7. The United Nations continued its cooperation with the League of Arab States on the question of Somalia. A United Nations representative attended the meeting on Somalia held by the League, jointly with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, at Cairo on 22 and 23 February 1995, under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General of the League. The participants agreed on the need to intensify joint efforts to assist the Somalis in achieving national reconciliation.

8. During the period under review, the secretariats of the United Nations and the League of Arab States, as well as the Office of the Permanent Observer for the League of Arab States to the United Nations, also continued to maintain close contact on other matters of mutual concern to the two organizations. High-level contacts included a meeting between the Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and the Secretary-General of the League (Cairo, February 1995) during which it was agreed to review the current cooperation protocol agreement between the Commission and the League and to hold periodic meetings to review matters of mutual interest; the official visit of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to the League headquarters at Cairo, upon an invitation of the Secretary-General (September 1994); a meeting between the Coordinator of Operations for the West Bank and Gaza Strip at the headquarters of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and Arab League secretariat officials (Cairo, May 1995).

9. In addition, the Director-General of the International Labour Organization (ILO) visited the League in April 1994 and discussed with its Secretary-General issues of common interest. In his turn, the Secretary-General of the League visited ILO in June 1994 on the occasion of the International Labour Conference. In autumn 1994, the Secretary-General of the Arab League and the Vice-President of the World Bank (Middle East and North Africa region), on the occasion of launching a joint initiative, called for immediate action to confront the environmental crisis in the Arab world.

III. FOLLOW-UP ACTION ON PROPOSALS AGREED TO AT GENERAL MEETINGS BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM AND THE LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES

10. It may be recalled that at the joint meeting between the United Nations system and the League of Arab States, held at Geneva in July 1990 (see A/45/481/Add.1), it was decided to establish six sectoral areas of cooperation between the two organizations: international peace and security; food and agriculture; labour, trade, industry and environment; social affairs; education, science, culture and information; and communications.

11. A summary of the reports of the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system on their cooperation with the League of Arab States during the period under review is given below. This summary includes activities in the sectoral areas, as well as follow-up action on proposals adopted at the previous meetings, at Tunis in 1983 (see A/38/299 and Corr.1), Amman in 1985 (see A/40/481/Add.1) and Geneva in 1988, 1990 and 1993 (see A/43/509/Add.1, A/45/481/Add.1 and A/48/468/Add.1).

A. Department for Development Support and Management Services

12. The Department for Development Support and Management Services of the United Nations Secretariat has launched several initiatives for interdisciplinary and intersectoral collaboration with the League of Arab States. Department staff held meetings with the senior representatives of the League to discuss joint actions to organize a regional seminar on a new integrated approach for sustainable human development: spatial/sectoral development strategy for Arab countries. The League expressed its interest in such an activity, which could generate a dialogue between Arab countries on designing a framework for the coordination and coherence of human and sustainable economic and social development in the region. The Department is cooperating with the League in executing a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)-sponsored project on administrative development of the League secretariat at Cairo. As part of the project, the Department has assisted in purchasing a computer system, financed by the Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations (AGFUND).

B. Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis

13. Apart from providing the Secretariat of the League of Arab States with statistical and methodological information, the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis carries out research and analysis in the areas of population, global development issues and policies that are of substantial use to the work of both organizations. Of particular importance are the following publications: World Population Monitoring, an analysis of current population trends and policies of all the countries and regions of the world; Abortion Policies: a Global Review; The Health Rationale for Family Planning: Timing of Births and Child Survival; and the World Economic and Social Survey. In the field of technical cooperation, the Department has continued to cooperate with the League in the maternal and child health survey being conducted by the Pan-Arab Project for Child Development (PAPCHILD).

C. Department of Public Information

14. The Department of Public Information has continued to work closely with the League of Arab States and its missions, both at headquarters and through the United Nations information centres, particularly at Cairo and Tunis, exchanging and disseminating information, and developing media liaison and partnership with

educational institutions and non-governmental organizations. The Department believes that, given the importance of increasing cooperation with the League, and its role as an important regional organization, matters related to the dissemination of information and cooperation for the promotion of pluralistic and independent media should be included in the annual inter-agency sectoral meetings on areas of priority in the development of Arab States.

D. United Nations Office at Vienna

15. The Office for Outer Space Affairs has collaborated with the League of Arab States particularly in promoting international cooperation in space activities under the United Nations Programme on Space Applications. This process is being accomplished through regional and international meetings, training courses and workshops.

16. In 1994, the Office cooperated with the League in implementing recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. In addition, it organized the Fourth United Nations/European Space Agency Workshop on Basic Space Science (Cairo, 27 June-1 July 1994). In 1995, the United Nations Workshop on the Use of Space Techniques for Monitoring and Control of the Desert Environment is to be held at Damascus in November; it is organized by the Office together with the Arab Centre for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands.

17. As a follow-up to the recommendations of Agenda 21, adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the Office proposed that the League of Arab States co-sponsor a workshop or training course for the benefit of its member States in one of the following subjects: space techniques for monitoring and control of the desert environment; space technology for sustainable development of natural resources; applications of space techniques to prevent and combat disasters. The Office is prepared, through its Space Applications Programme, to offer the League assistance on education and training, especially in the practical applications of space technology.

E. Economic Commission for Africa

18. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the League of Arab States are in the process of negotiating an agreement which will constitute the specific legal basis for their formal cooperation. These negotiations are expected to be completed in the course of 1995.

19. The Commission has continued to cooperate with specialized organizations of the League in the following fields.

Regional cooperation for economic integration

20. The ECA subregional office based at Tangier has undertaken joint activities with some specialized organizations of the League in various development sectors aiming at promoting regional cooperation among countries of the North Africa subregion.

Promotion of trade relations

21. The Commission joined with OAU and the League to organize and to participate in the Arab/African Trade Fair which was held at Tunis in October 1993.

Information/documentation

22. The ECA Pan-African Development System (PADIS) and the Arab League Documentation Centre have cooperated intensively through exchange of information and documentation concerning the development activities of African and Arab countries.

Agriculture

23. ECA maintains close contacts with the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD) within the framework of the programme which they jointly entitled "environmentally sound nuclear science and technologies for food security, economic cooperation and sustainable development in Africa".

F. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

24. During the period under review, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) continued to coordinate and promote its joint activities with the League of Arab States and its specialized organizations as set out below.

Environment

25. The fourth session of the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for Environment approved the ESCWA initiative to establish the Joint Committee on Environment and Development in the Arab Region. Joint efforts continued for the implementation of regional priorities of Agenda 21 through participation in meetings, contribution to the formulation of appropriate recommendations and preparation of terms of reference for the non-governmental organizations. ESCWA also coordinated with both the United Nations Environment Programme and the Basel Convention secretariat to convene an Arab intergovernmental expert group meeting on transboundary movements of hazardous wastes.

Industry

26. A joint meeting with the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization on the standards of Arabic alphabets in informatics was held at Amman from 21-23 March 1994.

Transport

27. Within the framework of the protocol signed between ESCWA and the League, arrangements were made for closer cooperation and better coordination with the Arab League Transport Programme and the Union of Arab Railways. ESCWA participated in the study on road transport conducted by the League.

Social development

28. Efforts of the regional organizations, including the Arab Labour Organization, the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development and the AGFUND, were focused on the preparations for the World Summit for Social Development.

29. In preparation for the Fourth World Conference on Women, the Commission, in collaboration with the League and the Centre of Arab Women for Training and Research, organized the Arab Regional Preparatory Meeting from 6 to 10 November 1994.

Human settlements

30. As a result of consultations held in March 1994 with Habitat and the technical secretariat of the Arab Council of Ministers of Housing and Construction, an agreement was concluded to join efforts for the preparation of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and the periodic newsletter on human settlements in the Arab World.

Statistics

31. The cooperation materialized in three joint activities, namely, the Unified Arab Statistical Abstract, the Bulletin of Industrial Statistics in the Arab Countries, and the workshop on industrial statistics.

Energy

32. To further promote cooperation with the League of Arab States, appropriate technical and organizational machinery should be established.

Water resources

33. Preliminary discussions took place with the Secretariat of the League to establish a regional water resources council and a regional water training network.

G. United Nations Children's Fund

34. The main features of the cooperation between the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the League of Arab States were (a) promotion of the mid-decade goals for children adopted by the Arab States; (b) ratification and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; (c) periodic follow-up on the implementation by Governments of the Arab Plan for Childhood and its recommendations; (d) promotion of the Arab girl child, particularly girls' education, as a cross-cutting strategy; (e) support of League agencies, councils and associated organizations whose activities feed into the achievement of the above-mentioned objectives.

35. The League of Arab States and UNICEF reinforced their cooperation through several meetings held during the last two years between the UNICEF Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa and the Secretary-General of the

League. Strategies and action plans to strengthen such cooperation were worked out.

36. A special UNICEF/League of Arab States committee entrusted by the Tunis meeting with the follow-up on the implementation of the Arab Plan was expanded to incorporate the Arab Council for Childhood and Development, an associate of the Arab League. A similar committee comprising the three bodies has been active in preparing for and supervising a two-year project on the Arab girl child, the highlight of which is a specialized symposium, scheduled for the autumn of 1995.

37. UNICEF is supporting the League in updating its information and data-collecting systems, particularly those databases related to child issues. In this respect, UNICEF provided the League with the latest data and statistics on children in the Arab world. UNICEF is also supporting the PAPCHILD survey. UNICEF and the AGFUND jointly fund the PAPCHILD project, which is being implemented under the League umbrella.

38. UNICEF worked with the League and the Centre of Arab Women for Training and Research to incorporate children's and women's concerns into the Plan of Action for Arab Women, formulated in November 1994 and submitted to the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in September 1995.

39. The UNICEF Regional Office in the Middle East and North Africa coordinated with the League's Arab States Broadcasting Union in the distribution of a radio magazine series to Arab radio stations. This was the second such cooperation with this specialized organization of the League. Two training workshops for radio/television script-writers and producers were organized with the Arab States Broadcasting Union training centre at Damascus in 1993 and 1994, respectively.

40. Other areas of cooperation between the two organizations have dealt with primary education issues, the environment, population issues, human resources development in rural areas and structural adjustment programmes.

H. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

41. During the period under review, cooperation between the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the League of Arab States and its specialized organizations was further strengthened through the UNCTAD intersectoral project on prospects for the sustained development of the Palestinian economy in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Part One of the project, dealing with an assessment of the current situation, needs and measures for immediate action, has been completed and a detailed programme of technical assistance for the Palestinian people has been drawn up. Once it is approved by the Palestinian Authority, it will be submitted to sources of funding, including the League, whose collaboration will also be sought in the implementation of the programme.

42. Other parts of the project, including a study on the longer-term prospects for promoting the sustainable development of the Palestinian economy and a

technical assistance programme, will be finalized in 1995. The involvement of the League and its specialized organizations in the funding and implementation of this programme will be sought. The UNCTAD secretariat is also preparing an in-depth study on the regional dimensions of the Palestinian economy and consultations will be held with the League on the substantive scope and orientation of the study.

43. Cooperation between the UNCTAD secretariat and the League has been further strengthened in connection with the Arab external sector through the provision of technical assistance to Arab countries. A programme on Arab State economy and trade has been finalized by UNCTAD in collaboration with the Arab Trade Financing Programme, the International Trade Centre and UNDP. The programme covers trade policy reforms, trade efficiency and human resources development.

44. An UNCTAD technical mission attended a meeting of Arab experts on the impact of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations on Arab economies, which was held at Cairo from 4 to 7 July 1994.

45. In close cooperation with the League and its specialized organizations and the World Trade Organization secretariat, UNCTAD and UNDP organized a regional symposium on the evaluation of the implications of the Uruguay Round for Arab countries, which was held at Casablanca from 21 to 23 November 1994.

I. United Nations Development Programme

46. The areas of cooperation between the League of Arab States and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) are summarized below.

Exchange of information

47. The Regional Bureau for Arab States exchanges information with the League on UNDP initiatives and mandates through briefings given to ambassadors of the States members of the League accredited to the United Nations. Generally, two meetings are held before the sessions in February and June of the UNDP Governing Council.

Direct support to the Arab League

48. UNDP supported the establishment of a modern and sophisticated documentation and information centre for the Arab League in collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. UNDP also supported an Arab Regional Information System Network which builds on previous assistance to the Arab League Documentation Centre in its efforts to create an information network in the Arab region.

49. The League of Arab States and the Arab Labour Organization (ALO) are participating in the Arab Declaration on Social Development with UNDP and ESCWA as well as the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, AGFUND and ILO. This project has supported the production of a draft Arab declaration.

Joint Committee on Environment and Development in the Arab Region

50. The Regional Bureau for Arab States confirmed its commitment to participating in the work of the League's Joint Committee on Environment and Development in the Arab Region and accordingly designated the UNDP Cairo field office as its representative and focal point.

Cooperation with the specialized and associated organizations of the League

51. UNDP continues to execute and to cost-share projects with the League and the following of its specialized and associated organizations: Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, Arab Organization for Agricultural Development, Arab Telecommunication Union, Arab Monetary Fund and Arab Trade Financing Programme, Inter-Arab Investment Guarantee Corporation, Arab Maritime Transport Academy, Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization, Arab Civil Aviation Council, Arab Postal Union and Arab Labour Organization.

52. With regard to further cooperation with the League, the Regional Bureau believes that regular consultations on issues of concern to the Arab region should be systematized. Issues relating to environment, intra-Arab trade, human development and energy should be given the highest priority. Similarly, the League and its specialized organizations should be consulted, to the extent possible, in the preparation of regional reports for various regional and international development conferences.

53. The level of project execution by and cost-sharing with the League and its specialized organizations could be increased through intensive participation in the preparation of regional programmes, mid-term reviews and evaluations. Parallel financing of regional projects is yet another form of collaboration.

54. The mechanisms that could be considered for enhancing collaboration between UNDP and the League, which should be founded on the premise of ensuring networking and complementarity of efforts, are exchange of information between the League and its specialized organizations and UNDP on programmatic matters; participation of UNDP in the various annual conferences of the specialized organizations; participation of the League and its specialized organizations in meetings of resident representatives; and systematic quarterly briefings in New York of League ambassadors accredited to the United Nations.

J. United Nations Environment Programme

55. Cooperation between the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the League of Arab States, especially the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment and the specialized organizations of the League, entered a new phase in 1994. The following five programmes were the subject of a joint programme activity of the three bodies, with a total budget of US$ 1.2 million (UNEP provided $600,000 for these activities):

(a) Combating desertification and increasing the green area;

(b) Combating industrial pollution;

(c) Environmental education, awareness and information;

(d) ervation of biodiversity;

(e) Establishment of a network on environmental information.

56. As an immediate follow-up to the meeting of the Executive Director with the Secretary-General of the League, the Director of the UNEP Regional Office for West Asia and representative to the League initiated action to develop a framework for implementation of the remaining parts of the Arab programmes for sustainable development of nomadic areas; human settlements; institutional development and support; marine environment and coastal areas; human resource development; development of the rational use of water resources; development of environmentally sound technologies; and protection of monuments and historical areas.

57. The biennium 1994-1995 is thus a landmark in UNEP cooperation with the League of Arab States system and marks a significant change from ad hoc, sporadic activities to a concerted programme for environmentally sustainable development.

K. United Nations Population Fund

58. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the League of Arab States continue to strengthen their cooperation in the field of population and sustainable development. One of the major achievements of this cooperation is the establishment of the Population Research Unit, a permanent structure in the League which is responsible for undertaking population and population-related research for advocacy and policy matters. With UNFPA assistance, the Unit through the years has played an important role of sensitizing ministerial councils of health and social affairs on population and human development issues.

59. During the International Conference on Population and Development, the Unit was instrumental in mobilizing League resources to assist in organizing high-level meetings to brief the heads of delegations on the Conference Programme of Action and in reaching a common understanding and consensus among Arab States in support of the Conference and its Programme of Action.

60. In addition to its policy and advocacy role, the Population Research Unit is conducting, with the financial and technical support of UNFPA, a regional research programme including analysis of demographic, socio-economic and health data at country and regional levels; policy-oriented research on migration; studies on Arab women in society and their contribution to development; and dissemination of population information. Most importantly, the Unit is using its research programme to contribute to the strengthening of national capabilities in data analysis and policy formulation through the organization of a series of training workshops using the data of the PAPCHILD maternal and child health survey.

61. The Pan-Arab Project for Child Development (PAPCHILD) is another joint and successful effort between UNFPA and the League; it is also supported by AGFUND, the World Health Organization, UNICEF, the International Planned Parenthood Federation, the World Bank and the United Nations.

L. United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

62. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) places a high priority on maintaining a close working relationship with the League of Arab States. To this end, the Agency has sought to foster contacts between UNRWA officials and the League Secretariat at various levels and in various forums. UNRWA regularly participates in the sectoral meetings organized by the League and attends the annual meeting of its Education Council.

63. UNRWA appreciates the ongoing support of the League for UNRWA programmes and its continuing efforts to urge member States to increase voluntary contributions to the Agency's regular budget. In the current reporting period, Arab League member States contributed generously to the UNRWA regular budget and special assistance programmes in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. UNRWA maintains excellent relations with member States, in particular the host Governments of Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, whose support, and that of the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, is invaluable in helping the Agency to provide basic services to Palestine refugees.

M. United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

64. During the period under review, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) continued to explore ways to strengthen its cooperation with the League of Arab States. While no major technical cooperation activities were undertaken, every opportunity was seized to energize the cooperation between the two organizations, mainly through reciprocal representation at each other's major meetings and the following joint meetings related to the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II):

(a) First Arab Preparatory Meeting for Habitat II, held in March 1994, hosted by the Government of Jordan and organized by Habitat, in cooperation with ESCWA;

(b) Meeting held in October 1994, hosted by the Government of the United Arab Emirates and organized by Habitat, the League and ESCWA, which recommended the drafting of an Arab declaration on human settlements issues as a regional input to Habitat II;

(c) Meeting of the Council of Arab Ministers for Social Affairs, held at League headquarters at Cairo in December 1994, in which Habitat participated as an observer.

N. International Labour Organization

65. During the period 1994-1995, cooperation between the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the League of Arab States and the Arab Labour Organization (ALO) was further strengthened by the implementation of a number of joint activities.

66. The International Labour Organization participated in all sessions of the ALO Governing Body and the Arab Labour Conference; it also attended the Conference on Family Rights (Cairo, May 1994) and participated in the meeting organized by the League on the implications of structural adjustment programmes on the population (Cairo, January 1995). In collaboration with ESCWA and the League, ILO participated in the preparatory expert meeting on the Arab Declaration on Social Development (Amman, September 1994), to which ILO contributed three studies on poverty alleviation.

67. Within the framework of the ILO/ALO joint programme agreed upon at the beginning of 1994, five Arab regional seminars/expert group meetings were organized on the following topics: employment and labour market policies; small enterprises development (for employers' organizations); employment and labour market programmes in the context of sustainable human development; and Arab and international labour standards.

68. The two labour organizations are jointly implementing two regional projects relating to labour administration and migration.

69. As in the past year, ILO held consultations with the League and ALO on the situation of workers in Palestine and the occupied Arab territories in preparation for the International Labour Conference.

O. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

70. Cooperation between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the League of Arab States continued during 1994-1995 in technical fields of mutual interest in the areas of agriculture and rural development, natural resources and environment protection, human resources training and global economic and social development.

71. The FAO Regional Office for the Near East and FAO technical divisions conducted and/or contributed to the preparation of the following studies: range-dependent small ruminants production systems in the Near East region; range and livestock development in the Arab world; integration of biotechnology for sustainable agriculture and rural development in the Arab countries; techno-economic aspects of the utilization of agro-industrial residues in the Near East region; human resources development and people's participation in the Arab countries; desertification in the Arab world; energy for sustainable agriculture and rural development; and advanced and modern efficient irrigation technology.

72. FAO and AOAD jointly organized a meeting on animal production and health services in the Arab region and the Near East (Cairo, September 1994). FAO and

the Joint Committee on Environment and Development in the Arab Region organized the preparatory expert consultation for the Pan-Arab Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (Cairo, September 1994). The expert consultation on the management and sustainable development of dry lands in the Arab world (Syrian Arab Republic, November 1994) was organized jointly by the International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas, FAO, AOAD, the Arab Centre for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands and ESCWA under the umbrella of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Plant Production and Protection.

73. A memorandum of understanding was agreed upon between FAO and AOAD to develop a programme of cooperation in the field of women in agriculture and rural development, within the framework of the FAO Regional Plan of Action for Women in Agriculture in the Near East (1996-2000).

74. In the field of fisheries development, FAO continued to enhance its technical cooperation activities with specialized organizations of the League. An agreement was reached to strengthen the fisheries training centre of the Arab Academy for Science and Technology; technical support and advisory services to the INFOSAMAK Centre continued to be provided directly by a Regional Fisheries Officer in the FAO Regional Office.

P. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

75. Efforts continue to be made to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), which has been invited to participate in the UNITWIN/UNESCO chairs programme. A UNESCO/ALECSO mixed commission is now elaborating the text of a new agreement on cooperation between the two organizations.

76. A number of activities have been implemented by the UNESCO Regional Office for Education in the Arab States since 1993 with the active cooperation of ALECSO and the Arab States Regional Literacy Organization, notably regional seminars and expert meetings related to women's literacy, adult education and the programme entitled "Universalization and renewal of primary education and eradication of adult illiteracy in the Arab States by the year 2000" (ARABUPEAL).

77. The UNESCO Regional Office for Science and Technology for the Arab States continues to take part in the Arab League workshop on appropriate technologies for the utilization of groundwater. A Regional Office staff member participates in two committees of the League dealing with environment and development for the coordination and promotion of environmental activities in the Arab region.

Q. International Civil Aviation Organization

78. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has maintained close liaison with the League of Arab States on matters relating to civil aviation, particularly through the ICAO Middle East Regional Office at Cairo.

79. The League of Arab States was invited to relevant ICAO meetings, including the area meeting on facilitation (Cairo, June 1994). Other areas of ICAO cooperation with members of the League include the aerodrome emergency planning seminar (Cairo, April 1994); the dangerous goods seminar (Amman, June 1994); and the combined communications, navigation and surveillance/air traffic management and satellite communications seminar (Cairo, August-September 1994).

R. World Health Organization

80. The World Health Organization/Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean (WHO/EMRO) has collaborated with the League of Arab States in the area of health through close cooperation between EMRO and the Council of Arab Ministers of Health. Important examples of such collaboration are given below.

Formulation of the Arab Strategy for Health Development

81. The final draft of the Arab Strategy for Health Development was prepared with the active participation of technical staff from the Regional Office in various health fields. In addition, WHO/EMRO's views were presented both in 1994 and 1995 during a meeting on a common strategy to combat drug abuse.

Environmental health

82. The Joint Committee on Environment and Development in the Arab Region has been trying to achieve the utmost degree of coordination possible among the Arab environmental action programmes adopted by the members of the Committee, through the exchange of information related to environmental action schemes and programmes of each member, and showing ways of cooperation to implement them.

83. Accordingly, the Division on Environmental Health in the Regional Office closely collaborates with the technical secretariat of the Joint Committee with regard to topics related to environmental health risk assessment and management. EMRO has actively participated in the various meetings organized by the League of Arab States.

84. WMO/EMRO is also collaborating with the Arab Urban Development Institute at Riyadh in the development of a healthy cities project and a healthy cities network for the Arab States.

Child health

85. A milestone in relations with the League of Arab States was the signing of the document for the multi-agency Pan-Arab Project for Child Development. WHO/EMRO is closely involved in the technical preparation and implementation of this project.

86. EMRO has taken an active part in collaborating with the League in finalizing a proposal for an Arab Plan of Action for the Protection and Promotion of the Health of Children in the Arab World.

Pharmaceuticals

87. EMRO is collaborating with the Supreme Arab Committee for Drug Affairs and the Arab Union of the Manufacturers of Pharmaceuticals and Medical Appliances. The main areas of collaboration include harmonization of drug registration requirements; preparation of the Arab Pharmacopoeia; promotion of drug industry in the Arab countries; development of Arab guidelines in various technical areas; and bulk drug procurement.

88. WHO has developed cooperation with ALECSO in areas that include the rehabilitation and care of disabled persons in the Arab countries and the integrated education of students with disabilities.

S. World Bank

89. The World Bank's Middle East and North Africa region office and the League of Arab States have been looking into the possibility of mounting joint activities in the region. An environmental strategy for Arab countries was launched last fall. The event was a joint activity with the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for Environment. The two organizations hope to build further on the solid cooperative base established on environment to raise awareness of similar development issues in the area.

T. Universal Postal Union

90. The regional technical cooperation activities of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) are coordinated with the Arab Permanent Postal Commission, which has replaced the Arab Postal Union and is composed of all the postal administrations of the member countries of the League of Arab States.

91. With respect to the Arab countries, five priority areas have been identified for 1991-1995, namely, (a) management restructuring; (b) knowledge of the market and commercial strategies; (c) quality of service and operational strategies; (d) human resources and training; (e) acquisition of technology related to postal building and installations. On the basis of these priorities, several group training activities were organized or programmed in recent years using the resources of UPU.

92. In addition, a symposium of Directors-General of Arab postal services was held at Cairo in cooperation with the League of Arab States, with a view to following up the Washington General Action Plan and defining Arab postal strategy for the coming years.

93. Two group training activities were planned for 1995: a marketing course in the Syrian Arab Republic in June 1995 and a postal security course in Egypt in October 1995.

U. International Telecommunication Union

94. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has maintained and strengthened its relationship with the League of Arab States. In this context, ITU has kept the technical secretariat of the League informed of the progress of the MODARABTEL regional project regarding its final activity and training course on data communication. The Union attended a large number of meetings of League committees and subcommittees. Likewise, the League attended a number of ITU meetings, namely the World Telecommunication Development Conference (Buenos Aires, March 1994) and the Plenipotentiary Conference at Kyoto, September-October 1994.

95. ITU was instrumental in helping the technical secretariat of the League to conduct training courses and joint regional seminars, specifically in the setting up of a mechanism through the ITU annual plan of training courses and workshops to fulfil to the extent possible the requirements of the Arab countries.

V. World Meteorological Organization

96. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) participated at the eleventh session of the Permanent Meteorological Committee of the League of Arab States in January 1995. It continues to assist the Committee in the achievement of its objectives and goals by implementing its recommendations and decisions related to the promotion of meteorological and hydrological services in support of sustainable development in the Arab States.

97. WMO is also a member of the Joint Committee on Environment and Development in the Arab Region. The Organization continues to assist the regional meteorological training centres established in the Arab region.

98. In addition, cooperation has continued between members of the League and the International Monetary Fund, the World Food Programme and the World Trade Organization.

W. International Fund for Agricultural Development

99. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the League of Arab States continued to attend each other's meetings as observers. During the period under review periodic contacts between the Secretariat of the League and IFAD have been maintained. The two organizations exchange relevant information and publications, particularly on programmes designed to combat desertification.

100. In addition to direct project financing, IFAD has been supporting, through the technical assistance grant programme, various regional agricultural research institutions in the Arab world, such as the Arab Centre for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands and the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development. The IFAD grant resources have been used by these two institutions to finance the development of agricultural technologies suitable to the Fund's target groups in

the Arab region, such as the date palm research and development network programme, the programme on regional farming systems in the region, and the research and development of wheat and barley in the semi-arid zones.

101. Furthermore, IFAD has provided AOAD with grants for training programmes with the objective of strengthening the institutional capabilities of Arab countries for project preparation and implementation of rural development projects.

X. United Nations Industrial Development Organization

102. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) has continued to maintain close cooperation with the League of Arab States and its specialized organizations.

103. Within the framework of three agreements on cooperation signed in 1988, 1989 and 1994, joint activities were undertaken in various industrial spheres, including preparation of feasibility studies and investment project profiles, organization of training workshops, assistance in the establishment of data banks, conducting of industrial surveys and promotion of joint Arab investment projects. As a recent activity in the context of cooperation with the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization, a working document on the potential for Arab cooperation in industrial development was prepared for the 1994 ministerial meeting.

104. A new mechanism for regional industrial cooperation was initiated by UNIDO under the Special Programme for Industrial Development in the Arab Countries, with a view to strengthening inter-State cooperation (bilateral, subregional and regional) and to meeting the needs of the Arab least developed countries. In cooperation with the League and other regional organizations the priority areas of the Special Programme have been defined.

105. Current UNIDO activities include a meeting on cooperation for the development of joint projects in the field of catalysts and/or production of lubricating oil additives in selected developing countries; a workshop for the development of cooperation and production of machine tools in the Gulf region; a capacity-building programme in technology transfer negotiation in the Arab countries, phase I: regional training workshop, Amman; assessment of instrumentation facilities and services available in the countries of the Western Asia region; and a consultative meeting on strategies for development of marine agricultural and industrial biotechnology in the Arab region.

106. At a recent meeting with the League's Departments of Economic Relations and Productive Sectors and Environment, some additional areas of cooperation, such as industrial statistics, environmental protection and pollution control, the implications of the Uruguay Round agreements for the manufactures of Arab countries, and petrochemicals, have been identified and concrete projects are currently under review.

IV. GENERAL MEETING ON COOPERATION BETWEEN THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE SECRETARIATS OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM AND THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF THE LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES AND ITS SPECIALIZED ORGANIZATIONS, VIENNA, 19-21 JULY 1995

107. As recommended by the General Assembly in its resolution 49/14, the general meeting on cooperation between the representatives of the secretariats of the United Nations system and the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States and its specialized organizations was held at Vienna from 19 to 21 July 1995. This occasion marked the fiftieth anniversary of both the United Nations and the League of Arab States.

108. Representatives of the following bodies of the United Nations system and the League of Arab States participated in the meeting:

(a) United Nations system: United Nations Secretariat, including Department for Development Support and Management Services, Department of Humanitarian Affairs, Department of Political Affairs and Department of Public Information; United Nations Office at Vienna, including Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch and Office for Outer Space Affairs; Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia; United Nations Children's Fund; United Nations Development Programme; United Nations Environment Programme; United Nations Population Fund; United Nations International Drug Control Programme; United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East; United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat); International Labour Organization; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; International Telecommunication Union; World Meteorological Organization; World Health Organization; International Fund for Agricultural Development; United Nations Industrial Development Organization; and International Atomic Energy Agency;

(b) League of Arab States: League of Arab States Secretariat, Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD), Arab Academy for Science and Technology (AAST), Arab Centre for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD), Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization (AIDMO), Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA), Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), Arab Labour Organization (ALO), Arab Authority for Agricultural Investment and Development (AAAID), Arab Atomic Energy Agency (AAEA), Council of Arab Interior Ministers (AIMC) and Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations (AGFUND).

109. The meeting had before it 22 working papers prepared by the Centre for Disarmament Affairs, the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch, the Department for Humanitarian Affairs, the Department of Political Affairs, the Department for Development Support and Management Services, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the International Labour Organization, the International Telecommunication Union, the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the United Nations Office

for Outer Space Affairs, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, the Arab Academy for Science and Technology, the Arab Atomic Energy Agency, the Arab Centre for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands, the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization and the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization.

110. The meeting adopted the following agenda:

I. Review and appraisal of cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States and future prospects.

II. Maintaining international peace and security:

(a) Preventive diplomacy and peace-making;

(b) Disarmament.

III. Mine clearance.

IV. Follow-up in other areas:

(a) Human resources development in rural areas (sectoral meeting at Vienna, July 1994);

(b) United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa;

(c) Implementation of programmes of action adopted by international conferences;

(d) Agenda 21 (environment and sustainable development);

(e) Drug control and crime prevention.

V. Commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations and the League of Arab States.

111. The opening session of the meeting was devoted to the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations and the League of Arab States. Statements by the Co-Chairmen and representatives of the United Nations system and the League took stock of the cooperation achieved thus far and suggested ways and means to further strengthen and expand collaboration between the two organizations.

112. In the course of their deliberations, the representatives of the organizations of the United Nations system and the League and its specialized organizations undertook a critical review and appraisal of progress in cooperation. The meeting recognized the importance of continuing cooperation between the two organizations with a view to contributing to the maintenance of international peace and security and to promoting social and economic development.

113. At the meeting, the League of Arab States reiterated its firm commitment to supporting the United Nations in achieving the goals and objectives set out in the Charter with regard to ensuring international peace and security and the promotion of freedom, sovereignty and progress for all peoples.

114. The meeting pointed out the importance of preventive diplomacy as an effective tool in easing political tensions and defusing potential crises that might lead to armed conflicts in different regions of the world.

115. It was agreed that the confidence-building measures and other preventive measures proposed by the United Nations Secretary-General in his report entitled "An Agenda for Peace" and the supplement thereto should be elaborated in coordination and in consultation with the relevant regional organizations in order to help improve the United Nations capacity for dealing with threats to international peace and security. Regular contacts and consultations between the United Nations and the League of Arab States would contribute to achieving these objectives.

116. The meeting stressed the importance of dealing with disarmament issues through a comprehensive approach covering all States as well as all weapons of mass destruction. Security and stability in the Middle East require that the region be made a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons.

117. The meeting stressed the humanitarian element of the ever-growing problem caused by the presence of land-mines and other unexploded devices as a result of armed conflicts and expressed deep concern over the serious social and economic consequences for the populations of mine-infested countries.

118. It was agreed that international cooperation to provide technical and financial support to mine-affected countries is essential to create and strengthen national capacities in mine clearance. The meeting emphasized that the only way to stop the proliferation of land-mines is through a total ban on the production, use and transfer of mines.

119. The meeting agreed to further consolidate and strengthen cooperation in the six areas called for in General Assembly resolution 49/14 (see para. 10 above). In this context, the participants focused on such issues as joint projects to combat desertification; human resources development in rural areas; projects regarding human settlements; activities in the fields of industry, maritime transportation, telecommunications and postal service; trade; labour and employment; education, science and culture; health; environment; population, including the Pan-Arab Project for Child Development; crime prevention and criminal justice and drug control; services provided to Palestinian refugees; and outer space affairs.

120. The items of the agenda were considered by the working groups composed of representatives of the departments, organizations and bodies concerned. Proposals and recommendations emanating from discussions as well as those contained in the working papers were incorporated in the Final Document adopted at the closing session of the general meeting. The Final Document was transmitted by the United Nations Secretariat to all the participating United

Nations organizations and to the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States in August 1995.

121. Finally, the meeting was informed that the High-level Coordination Committee of the League and its specialized organizations had identified seven priority sectors for enhancing cooperation within the United Nations system, namely, energy; rural development; desertification and green belts; training and vocational training; technology; environment; and information and documentation. The United Nations and the specialized agencies of the United Nations system agreed to study these proposals and to respond to the League of Arab States.